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ABSTRACT

The Canada-India Institutional Cooperation Project (CIICP) is a joint venture by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and the governments of India and Canada designed to contribute to human resource development in India's polytechnic system. Specifically, the project seeks to develop replicable models of institutional development in 13 pilot polytechnic institutes in southern India to help make these institutions more responsive to the workforce training needs of local industry, businesses, and communities. The approach to human resource development taken by the project is one of learning by doing, with educators learning planning skills by actually planning project activities. Since implementation in September 1991, improvements within the polytechnics have been noted in the areas of strategic planning, management training, staff development activities, continuing education, industry and community interaction, the participation of women, and environmental education. The success of the partnership is attributed to the CIICP partnership strategy, which is based on building effective relationships, joint implementation, the provision of training for participation in the partnership, and the counterpart approach to the implementation of project activities in which every training session is offered jointly by Canadian and Indian partners. The CIICP has been successful in helping the polytechnics improve the quality of education, provide training relevant to community needs, and generate revenue in their communities. In addition, Canadian colleges have gained important linkages with Indian institutions, opportunities to internationalize their campuses, and vast professional development experiences for faculty. (TGI)

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CANADA- INDIA INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION PROJECT

International Partnerships in Education

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(19th, Phoenix, AZ, February 4-6, 1996)

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CANADA-INDIA INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION PROJECT: International Partnerships in Education

Abstract

This paper briefly describes a four year educational development project carried out in India by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges in partnership with a variety of Canadian and Indian organizations. The paper describes how the partnerships were established and how these partnerships have been instrumental in the success of the project and why they are critical to the sustainabilty of project results.

Project Overview

The Canada-India Institutional Cooperation Project (CIICP) is a joint venture of the Indian and Canadian Governments, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, and executed by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges in collaboration with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Gov't of India. Begun in September, 1991, the project has completed its first phase and planning is currently underway for phase two.

The goal of the project is to contribute to Human Resource Development within the Indian polytechnic system in order to improve the capacity of the system to meet India's priority development needs. Specifically the project attempts to strengthen the Indian Society for Technical Education, and to develop replicable models of institutional development in thirteen pilot polytechnics in southern India so that these institutions may be more responsive to the workforce training needs of their local industry, business and community.

Project programs were planned and implemented in the areas of:

- strategic planning
- management training
- staff development
- continuing education
- industry and community interaction
- women in development
- environmental education

The approach to human resource development taken by the project is one of *learning by doing*. Indian educators develop planning skills by being involved in planning project activities; improve training skills by helping to train others; practice new concepts during hands-on workshops involving role plays and case studies; and apply new skills in their own polytechnic with support and coaching from visiting Canadian and Indian mentors.

Instrumental to the success of CIICP has been the concept of partnership. The partners are many: The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), ten Canadian colleges, the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, three Indian state Directorates of Technical Education, the Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE), the Technical Teachers' Training Institute (TTTI) in Madras, thirteen Indian polytechnics, a variety of non-governmental organizations, and dozens of individual Canadian and Indian educators. The ability to build effective partnerships has not only contributed to the successful implementation of CIICP but to its legacy. Ongoing partnerships will be critical to the sustainability of project initiatives and the continuing development of the technical education system in India.

CIICP Results

The impact of the project has been significant. External monitors have noted a variety of improvements within the pilot polytechnics resulting in more efficient utilisation of financial and human resources. Students have commented on improved teaching and learning activities and student job placements have risen steadily. Polytechnics have developed methods to generate revenues and processes to prioritize spending. Committees for women, environment, student counselling, professional development, industry liaison and curriculum development are functioning productively and many have forged linkages with organizations and industries to help meet their objectives.

Sample accomplishments in each program area include:

Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE) has more than tripled its membership, and has developed a cadre of master trainers supported by a series of training modules and learning materials.

Strategic Planning has resulted in a renewed sense of mission in the pilot polytechnics, improved leadership, a participatory management style, and a commitment to a process of continuous improvement.

Management Training has generated team spirit and an attitude of cooperation among polytechnic managers. Competencies have been enhanced in a variety of management, human relations, and information systems skills in over 150 principals, heads of

departments and other senior polytechnic staff, resulting in more efficient and effective operations.

Staff Development has improved the quality of the teaching-learning experience by providing teachers with new teaching strategies and increased self-confidence. Each polytechnic has a trained Staff Development Manager with skills to assess professional development needs and to develop competency based curriculum.

Continuing Education has established a Continuing Education Cell at each polytechnic with the capacity to identify training needs, and to plan, implement and evaluate training programs for local business, industry and community. Over the past three years, over 750 continuing and non-formal education programs have been offered through project polytechnics on a cost recovery or revenue generating basis. Over 24,000 part time students have benefited from these courses, many of them people who had not had previous access to polytechnic education. Nine of the polytechnics are generating sufficient revenue from continuing education activities to be able to finance new capital ventures and development projects for students and staff.

Industry and Community Interaction has resulted in better industry input into curriculum, development of new courses congruent with industry needs, increased student job placement, and more opportunities for industrial training and consultancies for polytechnic staff. Many polytechnics have entered into joint ventures with industry and community organizations to provide training for specific target groups, and several polytechnics are acting as brokers or executing agencies for community development projects funded by government or NGO's.

Women in Development initiatives have significantly increased the number of women actively involved in polytechnic activities by providing programs to increase self-confidence, communication and leadership skills among women, and through initiatives to raise awareness of gender issues and to reduce barriers within the system. Special programs have been initiated for women students, and for disadvantaged women.

Environmental Education has resulting in greener and cleaner campuses and heightened awareness of environmental issues among staff and students. Environment education is being integrated into the curriculum and several polytechnics are working with industry to tackle local environmental problems.

Together these results have contributed to overall institutional development, and the project polytechnics are becoming models of dynamic, relevant institutions, responsive to the needs of their communities, and contributing to the social and economic development of India. The next phase of CIICP will be to determine the best ways that these processes and strategies for institutional development can be effectively replicated in other polytechnics in India.

Partnership within C.I.I.C.P.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which funds CIICP, is concerned about the sustainability of its development initiatives. Too often education projects funded by governments and donor agencies focus on the transfer of skills and technology, without sufficient concern for capacity development. At the end of any project the transferred skills and technology can quickly become outdated. If the institution does not develop the capacity to plan and manage a continuous process of quality improvement, it cannot sustain project gains or maintain institutional development. ACCC has attempted to plan and implement CIICP as a genuine partnership, so that project polytechnics, through their unique involvement in all aspects of the project, gain the capacity to continue planning and implementing their own improvements.

A related issue is one of ownership or empowerment. Many development projects fail because the local stakeholders feel that "outside experts" have assessed their problems and determined a remedy with little or no input from the people most impacted by the project. They may feel alienated and provide little support to project activities. As CIICP is planned and implemented as a partnership it is viewed as belonging to the polytechnics themselves. Polytechnic staff often say, "this is not a Canadian project, this is *our* project", and it is these locally committed people who are dedicated to maintaining project initiatives and sustaining project improvements into the future.

When asked about the success of CIICP, Mr. Peter Hoffman, Senior Program Director of the Canadian International Development Agency replied, "I can only speculate on why this project has been such a success, when others have not. Mainly, I think it is because it has always been pursued as a partnership".

The C.I.I.C.P. Partnership Strategy

1. Building Relationships:

Partnerships are not born, they are made. It takes time, resources and effort to develop effective relationships. Building a partnership between Indian and Canadian institutions and educators involves building a bridge between two cultures.

The first six months of CIICP involved fifteen Canadian educators, representing the participating colleges and ACCC, travelling to India to familiarize themselves with the Indian technical education system, Indian culture and some of the challenges facing polytechnics. This was followed by eighteen Indian educators, representing ISTE, TTTI,

the state Directorates of Technical Education and the pilot polytechnics, travelling to Canada for a similar experience. After the orientations the Canadian and Indian teams met together for two weeks to jointly design and plan the project. This intense session had a number of important results:

- project plan based on stakeholder input
- shared vision of project purpose and goals by Canadians and Indians
- thorough understanding of project design by key personnel
- improved understanding of each other's culture, communication styles, and business practices
- mutual trust, team spirit and group cohesiveness

2. Joint Implementation:

The project plan, developed by the first team of partners, laid out a structure of partnership for implementation of the project at all levels. A joint project steering committee with representatives of both federal governments, the Indian state governments, ACCC, ISTE and TTTI was established to oversee the project and make policy recommendations. A state implementation committee was established in each of the three participating states with representatives from ISTE, TTTI, ACCC, and each pilot polytechnic to coordinate project initiatives within each state. A planning group was established within each polytechnic to oversee implementation of the project at the institutional level and to begin the process of strategic planning at the polytechnic.

At the polytechnic level, emphasis was placed on grass roots involvement. A participatory style of management was encouraged to increase stakeholder involvement and to build teams and partnerships within the institution and with the community. The strategic planning group at each polytechnic was given the task of seeking input on the project and all aspects of polytechnic activity from a wide variety of constituent groups.

In Canada, the ten participating colleges are grouped into three consortia, each one providing program expertise in different areas. Each consortium has a lead college which selects representatives and technical experts to participate in the various project activities and to work together with representatives from ACCC at planning meetings.

Annually, a core group of Canadian and Indian planners gather in India with other educators, experts and polytechnic representatives to review the progress of the project and plan the details of the next year's activities. Based on the results already achieved, objectives are modified and confirmed, and activities are planned accordingly. Each year the partnerships between and among the participants are strengthened and the planning. communication, group work, and negotiation skills are honed.

3. Training for Partnership:

The project plan called for the process of institutional development to begin with strategic planning and to be led by the existing polytechnic leaders. To implement this a great deal of training was necessary in strategic planning itself, and in a variety of leadership and management skills. The Canadian consortium responsible for Management Development carried out a series of management training workshops on such topics as: Communication Skills, Leadership, Time Management, Group Process, Presentation Skills, Motivation for Change, Negotiation, Women in Management, Conflict Resolution, Team Building, Management Information Systems, Total Quality Management and Financial Management.

The training was augmented by follow up visits by Canadian and Indian facilitators to each polytechnic to help the polytechnic managers apply their new skills with their strategic planning groups and other on-campus committees.

The Canadian consortium responsible for Industry and Community Liaison provided a series of training programs in Continuing Education, Needs Analysis, Running Meetings, Interview Skills, and Industry Institute Interaction. These were also supported by visits to each polytechnic by Indian and Canadian resource people, and from Indian industry representatives, to assist with the establishment of program advisory committees, identification of business partners, enhancement of community outreach and the development of Continuing Education programs.

The skills to work effectively within partnerships are now well established within the staff of the polytechnics, and the concept of partnership in education is becoming institutionalized. As polytechnics have realized the benefits of working in partnership with industry, business, community groups, government, and other institutions, they have actively set out to establish such relationships and to maintain them.

4. The Counterpart Model:

CIICP has adopted the counterpart approach to the implementation of all project activities. Every training session offered within the project is offered by Canadian and Indian partners working as a counterpart team. When a training need is determined, one or more Canadian and Indian experts are recruited from among the participating institutions and they jointly plan, deliver and evaluate the training.

This counterpart model has been effective for two important reasons. Firstly it is far more effective than training by either a Canadian or an Indian alone. The Canadian partner may bring specific expertise, new technology, or a fresh approach to the Indian scene. The Indian partner is able to adapt the material to the local environment, offer realistic case studies, and respond to questions regarding application of the material within the

Indian context.

Secondly, the counterpart model has proven effective as a "train the trainer" strategy contributing to sustainability of project initiatives. After co-delivering a training session with a Canadian partner, the Indian resource person is able to more effectively repeat the program for additional audiences.

The Partnership Legacy

Many of the project polytechnics have used their skills in developing and maintaining partnerships to build linkages within their communities which help them meet their mandate and expand or improve their training services.

Tamil Nadu Polytechnic, Madurai has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Madurai and District Tiny and Small Scale Industries Association under which a variety of short term technical upgrading programs have been designed and implemented.

Government Polytechnic for Women, Bangalore, through a partnership with the Dhondenling Family Welfare Project, is offering cottage industries training to Tibetan refugees in villages near Bangalore.

Murugappa Polytechnic, Madras working with the Directorate of Technical Education in Tamil Nadu provides training in CNC operations to students and staff from other polytechnics.

Sree Rama Polytechnic, Valapad, through a contract with a private firm in the Sultanate of Oman, is providing skilled trades training to 120 Omanian students. Sree Rama Polytechnic also implements job oriented training programs for women on behalf of Cochin Refinery Ltd. as part of that firm's community development program.

Dr. Dharmambal Polytechnic for Women, Madras works with a local television manufacturer to provide on-the-job electronics up-grading for women employees.

Thiagarajar Polytechnic, Salem has obtained a contract and funding to develop curriculum and materials and to provide training for a civil engineering program in the Maldives.

Indian Society for Technical Education has offered a number of regional training programs in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry. ***ISTE*** itself continues to model exemplary partnership practices as it works with its growing number of institutional chapters to offer seminars and short-term teacher up-grading programs

throughout the country.

These examples indicate how successful polytechnics have been at improving their capability to offer high quality education and training. They also are illustrative of the polytechnics ability to initiate partnerships which will help them continue to improve the quality of their education, to provide training relevant to community needs, and to generate revenue.

Conclusion

CIICP has been successful in initiating and supporting a process of institutional development in pilot polytechnics in south India, and in supporting the development of the Indian Society of Technical Education as a resource to technical education institutions throughout India. Canadian colleges have gained important linkages with institutions in India, opportunities to internationalize their campuses, and vast professional development experiences for faculty.

Although not all project polytechnics have developed to the same capacity, sufficient models are now available to begin the process of replication to other polytechnics throughout India.

Project results can be attributed to many factors, however, one of the key elements in the success of CIICP has been the emphasis on partnership, both as a philosophy of project implementation and sustainability, and as a criteria for successful development of educational institutions.

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